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11-1027FREE WORLD RADIO REACTION TO MIDDLE AND FAR EAST CRISIS

The reaction of free world radios to the critical events in the Middle and Far East during the last half of 1958 closely paralleled that of the press. This congruity derived primarily from the radios' practice of relying heavily on quotations from the press. In those countries where the radio was government controlled but the press was not, the radio reaction tended to be more consistent than that of the press--a consistency achieved in part by a selective culling of the mixed press opinions.

Thus, on the Middle East crises, West European radio comment generally supported the attitudes and actions of the United States and its allies, although with reservations stemming in part from the feeling that Washington and London had frequently shown too little ability to adjust realistically to the tide of Arab nationalism. In the Far East the Japanese radio, which generally applauded U.S. technical and economic assistance to the Middle Eastern states, demonstrated some sympathy, too, for Arab nationalism and opposition to the use of American and British troops. The most unequivocal support for Western policy came from the Saigon, Seoul, and Taipei radios, which viewed the American and British actions as necessary counters to communist encroachment in the area.

The Middle East radios, with the exception of those of Lebanon, Iran, Israel, and Jordan, were consistently critical of the American and British landings in Lebanon and Jordan, viewing those actions as a flagrant compromise of those nations' sovereignty, and as a desperate effort to buttress unpopular governments. The projected summit conference on the Middle East was awaited with mixed feelings in Western Europe, but in the Middle East the unanimous sentiment was that it could not be effective without adequate Middle East representation. The ensuing U.N. session on the Middle East was generally hailed as an Arab victory in Western Europe, in the Middle East, and in Asia.

Radio reaction to the Far East crises ranged from the unequivocal support of American policy voiced by the Nationalist Chinese, Vietnamese, and South Korean radios, through the mixed but generally approving comment of the Free Western Europe and Japan radios and the mixed but generally disapproving comment of the Indian radio, to the outright critical attitude assumed by most of the Middle East transmitters. Even among those radios normally sympathetic to the United States--with the exception of Seoul, Saigon, and Taipei--it was apparent that there was some uneasiness with what was felt to be the lack of realism involved in Washington's continuing determination to snub the Chinese Communists. The common denominator of even the most sympathetic comment was that the defense of Quemoy and Matsu was not worth the risk of a devastating third world war. The UAR radio was vociferous in its support of Peking and criticism of the United States, but Turkey, Greece, and Iran generally supported the U.S. policy as fully warranted to cope with Chinese communist arrogance.

There was virtually no monitored Latin American reaction to either the events in the Middle East or in the Taiwan Straits. The radios generally limited themselves to reporting the events on the basis of Western news dispatches.

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